

**BATTLE CREEK CITY PLANNING COMMISSION  
WORKSHOP MINUTES  
Wednesday, February 22, 2012**

**1. Attendance:**

**Members Present:**

Susan Baldwin (Mayor)	John Godfrey	John Stetler
Dan Buscher	Preston Hicks	Dave Walters
Jan Frantz	Chip Spranger	

**Members Excused:** Steve Barker

**Staff Present:** Susan Bedsole, License & Compliance Director  
Christine Hilton, Planning Supervisor  
Glenn Perian, Senior Planner  
Leona Parrish, Administrative Assistant, Planning Dept.

**2. Planning Commission Discussion**

**A. Annual Report For Planning Department - 2011**

**Discussion:**

Ms. Christine Hilton provided an update regarding the Annual Report and also referred to page 18, noting additional work outlined as being a part of staffs work that is done on a daily basis.

Commissioner Hicks asked to define the cost of the application fee of \$600 dollars. Ms. Hilton stated the amount was determined based on the cost of publication and notices that are a requirement by the State.

Commissioner Godfrey asked if the cost was ever too much of a factor and caused someone to not file an application and then proceed to doing whatever without applying to get approval. Ms. Hilton stated since she has worked for the city; she had not seen that the cost had been an issue.

Commissioner Stetler suggested that a copy of the Planning Department Annual Report be shared and distributed to neighboring Townships and Cities. Mayor Baldwin noted that it could be distributed at their Area Metro Services Agency meeting.

**B. Planning Department Project Priority List**

**Discussion:**

Ms. Christine Hilton stated the Project List was a summary of projects needing to be done and was setup in the order of priority which is updated routinely making it an on-going project list. Ms. Hilton pointed out the following:

- The Geographic Information Systems (GIS) parcel maps need reviewed and updated so that parcels match the map.
- New permit applications need to be revised in order to obtain more information from the petitioner.
- Need to get rid of approximately 400 + city owned vacant lots as we now are having to pay taxes on; could possibly give to the Calhoun County Land Bank.
- Need to do an existing land use survey.
- Zoning ordinance amendments need to be done, especially the downtown area.
- Need to go through and review site plans and ensure that previous ones have been done as well as the current plans.
- Billboard Sign locations need to be updated and will ask Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to help with a new survey.

Ms. Hilton stated this project list is a two to three year on-going projects list.

Commissioner Buscher asked if the City Attorney's office could help with the ordinance revisions. Ms. Hilton stated they are currently short staffed and that the Planning Department would work together with them a little at a time, as it is not pressing.

Commissioner Hicks asked if the Planning Commission is being helpful to the Planning staff. Ms. Hilton stated that regarding the needed ordinance amendments; a committee may be helpful in the future to get them developed and/or revised.

Ms. Susan Bedsole stated it would be helpful for the Planning Commission to speak as a body or board and work together when requesting projects to be done, instead of having nine separate individuals; in doing so, it would ensure that everyone have the same priorities.

Commissioner Buscher asked if there would be any staff increases in the future; Ms. Bedsole stated she did not foresee any in the future because of budget restrictions.

Commissioner Spranger agrees that the board should look at projects as one and decide if it is important to act on or not.

Commissioner Stetler stated a few of the items on the projects list have been on their agenda several times and he believed the Planning Commission had decided to pursue them further.

Commissioner Frantz stated for the good of the order, they cannot overlook their statutory responsibility, which is to present recommendations to the City Commission.

Ms. Susan Bedsole stated they respect the opinions of the Planning Commission and that it can take months to get items moved to the City Commission; that they need to see if it is really a priority to devote the time and staff to work on before going forward to the City Commission. Said they need a commitment from Planning Commission to have good discussion on an item to decide to move forward or not.

All agreed to discuss and make a decision to work on or not to save staff and everyone's time.

Commissioner Hicks asked if a list could be made to keep track of items that are requested. Ms. Bedsole stated yes, there is a list kept of those projects that are submitted.

Commissioner Buscher asked that staff decide what is important and if more time is allowed, and then bring it to the table for the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Godfrey asked if the Project List provided was in order of importance. Ms. Hilton stated, yes that was correct.

Commissioner Spranger asked that his request for the Transitional Business District Beckley Road Corridor be removed from the projects list, as he does not see it moving forward. Said because the City Commission had recently approved the church to be located on prime property on Beckley Rd., when there are other locations available and also with the selling of the five acres of land on Beckley Rd.; he does feel his request would get the City Commission's backing.

Ms. Hilton stated they need to update the Master Plan to match the zones that we currently have not included at this time like the Transitional Business District and Form Based Codes before we can legally change anything.

Commissioner Walters stated the City Commission holds workshop sessions and would like to listen to some of the items that might arise.

Mayor Baldwin stated that in looking at the projects list, she can now see how they are intra-related and the need to address some items first before changes can be made.

Ms. Susan Bedsole stated that in the past changes were done as needed and not looked at as a whole picture.

Mayor Baldwin believes that June 6<sup>th</sup> is the deadline for the Medical Marijuana and will then need to be addressed and might have to shift some items on the project list.

Ms. Christine Hilton stated there are some other departments that have input on some of the projects noted on the list and that her priority would be focusing on those items noted at the top of the projects list.

**Adjournment:** The workshop was adjourned at 5:24 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christine M. Hilton", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Christine M. Hilton, AICP  
Executive Secretary, Planning Commission